PIKE'S EXPLORATIONS.

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THE EXPEDITIONS OF ZEBULON MONTGOMERY PIKE. To Headwaters of the Mississippi River, Through Louisiana Territory, and in New Spain, During the Years 1805-6-7. A New Edition Now First Reprinted in Full from the Original of 1810. With Copious Critical Commentary, Memoir of Pike, New Map and Other Illustrations and Complete Index. By Elliott Coues. In Three Volumes. Vol. I, Pp. cxiii, 356. Vol. II, Pp. vi, 357-855. Vol. III, Pp. 857-955. Francis P. Harper.

In all externals these volumes are the counterpart of those in which appeared the records of the explorations of Lewis and Clark. There was almost no limit to the possibilities of improving the form in which Pike presented his narrative to the public. The editor has, indeed, no obscure copyist to condemn. Nobody intervened between Pike and his printer. Later efforts to improve the arrangement of the book only showed how useful to it a complete overhauling would be. The ancient jumble of main text and appendices has now been replaced with a methodical division into chapters where most of the miscellaneous fragments are relegated to their place in the journal, and the documents which cannot be so placed are set down by themselves in chronological order. Thus the eccentricities of the author are almost wholly done away with, to the despair of any who might wish to make a study of literary disorder that could not have been altogether due to accident. For such the only recourse will be a search for the first edition in which both Pike and his printer joined, not without a touch of pride, in announcing the difficulties under which they labored.

Whether Pike could have made a well-arranged book is doubtful. His education was meagre and defective and he was fully as odd by nature as the great soldier, Wolfe, whom he revered as his model in arms. The son of an officer, he grew up at a military post. Under his father's care he learned to write a good hand, to use practical mathematical instruments like the sextant, to talk French so as to make himself understood, and, above all, to command men with prompt decision. But Dr. Coues remarks that he could not spell a proper name twice the same way, though he had a multitude of curious ones to practise on among the Indian tribes of the Mississippi and Arkansas valleys. Nevertheless, what education he had was of a kind that was useful as far as it went. It sufficed to make him one of the most striking figures in the early military annals of the United States. His brief career was full of adventure and honors, and it ended, as Wolfe's had done, in the midst of victory. Strangely enough, however, this brilliant and patriotic career is closely interwoven with the treasonable schemes of Aaron Burr and General James Wilkinson. In fact, had it not been for Wilkinson, Pike might have waited long for the opportunity to distinguish himself. The interval between the Revolution and the War of 1812 would never have offered him a battle. But it was the time of the Louisiana purchase, of the march of Lewis and Clark across the continent, and of wild dreams of conquest. Perhaps Wilkinson envied the wonderful good fortune which had forced itself upon Jefferson. Knowing that the latter, then President, had sent Lewis and Clark to the West, he might have gained Executive approval for his own plans. But he chose to act on his own responsibility. Pike had reason afterward to know how much this was resented.

There could have been no treasonable thought behind the plan of the first expedition which Pike was ordered to make. It was simply a journey from St. Louis to the headwaters of the Mississippi River. The young lieutenant held councils with the Indian tribes along the shores, observed the position of all the tributary streams, tamed the aggressiveness of British traders, and in the depth of winter studied the lake region of Minnesota. He did not reach Lake Itasca, but he accomplished all that could be required of him as a military man. His second journey was not only hazardous, but it was dubious from a political point of view. The second officer in the command, and a son of General Wilkinson, the only civilian in the party, went over into Mexico as a spy, and Pike himself, with his squad of soldiers, wandered about the mountains of the Southwest until they were captured within the old Spanish boundaries. Their departure from the neighborhood of St. Louis had been managed in such a way that the real purpose of the expedition was easily kept a secret. But before Pike returned to the United States Burr had been arrested and the air was full of rumors about Wilkinson's share in the great conspiracy. Dr. Coues clears Pike of any part in the treason. But he does it at the expense of Pike's reputation as a man of keen intellect.

The ostensible purpose of the expedition was to explore the sources of the Arkansas River. But this design was obscured by the fact that the first duty of Pike and his men was to convey a band of about fifty Osage Indians to their tribe. By the time this preliminary task was accomplished the explorers were far from civilization. The young civilian, J. H. Robinson, joined the party, as if by accident. Before the journey was half completed young Wilkinson was sent back to report to his father, while Pike went on to meet the Spaniards. "He had a chip on each shoulder," says Dr. Coues, "for some Spaniard to please knock off; his coat-tails were dragging all over the Rocky Mountains for some Spaniard to please step on, and he would rather have broken some Spanish heads than have discovered the head of any river." The facts are put in these words too energetically, perhaps. Pike must have known that the Government at Washington knew little officially of his proceedings, and he was too wise to make war on his own account or even to please his general. He must have known, or guessed, more than he would have cared to tell about the business on which he was sent. He declared orally and in his reports and journals that he was searching for the source of the Red River. But his editor insists that he probably knew there was no such river in the region which he traversed. He was following the Spanish boundary as closely as a man could, and when he decided to built a little fort, he somehow chose a site on the wrong side of the line. If he had finished this work in time he might have felt like holding it. But his journey among the mountains had been one of frightful hardships. His men were scattered along the route disabled. Before his fortress was completed a hundred Spanish dragoons were upon him. He asked, with an innocent air, if he was not on the Red River, and they replied politely that he was on the Rio del Norte. With all his men inside his fort he might have disputed the point and referred it to Washington and Madrid. As it was, he agreed that the Spaniards were right, and so he was taken into Mexico, not as a prisoner, but as a military man from the United States, who had lost his way and had papers in his possession which the Spanish authorities were eager to examine. He was lucky enough to conceal his journal, but was deprived of his records of astronomical observations and of the chart which he had made. In spite of the commands of his guards, he kept up his journal in New Spain, eking it out later with information taken from Humboldt. As he failed to give Humboldt credit, he has ever since been under mild censure as a plagiarist.

Before he left Spanish soil he had learned of Burr's arrest and of the charges that were made against Wilkinson. The letter from the latter which greeted him on his return to the United States contained some remarkable phrases. The general had feared that his young and energetic subaltern was dead. As he was not dead, the general expressed the fervent hope that he would keep his mouth shut. Pike, in return, promised to dispose of his men so that their stories of adventure would gain as little publicity as possible. He was thoroughly loyal to his commanding officer. But there was a noteworthy lack of anything like surprise in his letters at the character of the accusations made against Wilkinson.

While, if the plot of Burr and Wilkinson had been successful, the result of Pike's expedition would have been useful to them, it was none the less valuable to the United States. The young lieutenant, now a captain, had carried out the instructions of his general to the letter, at the cost of much suffering on his own part and among his men. If the Spaniards had been less watchful, he would have given the international boundary question a totally new aspect. The Spanish authorities had left themselves no ground for a protest. Pike, for a good part of his journey, followed the trail of a Spanish force numbering several hundred men, the commander of which had been holding councils with the Indian chiefs in regions that unquestionably belonged to the United States. He made no pretence of an error in geography, while Pike maintained from first to last that he mistook the Rio del Norte for a certain Red River, which unfortunately never existed. By yielding to a force much greater than his own, Pike easily won the chance of making what was equivalent to a military reconnoissance into the heart of New-Spain. He found already, at a date forty years before the Mexican War, that there were plenty of people north of the Rio Grande who lived in daily expectation of victorious invasion by the United States. He estimated correctly, as events showed, the value of the soldiery which the United States would have to subdue. On his return to the United States he carried back information which furnished the basis of all future research. Yet he was not gratefully received. His demand for recompense from the Government for his services was refused or ignored. Dr. Coues remarks that the treatment by Congress of private claims is a matter for which no rule can be given.

But it must be remembered that Pike fell between two factions. He avoided attaching himself to Wilkinson, and he resented, first, the charges against that general, and, second, the imputation that, even if those charges were true, they affected his own reputation as a soldier and a patriot. He was bound by gratitude, as well as discipline, to speak well of Wilkinson. But the factional animosities of the time were heated. He could not speak well of Wilkinson and obtain at the same time the good offices of the men who surrounded Jefferson. It came out in the trial of Wilkinson that the general was wholly responsible for Pike's Southwestern expedition, though he claimed that the Government assented to it. In the House of Representatives it was hinted, in a way to make Pike angry, that his Western tour was "founded on views entirely unknown to the Government, and connected with the nefarious plans of Aaron Burr and his associates." In the temper evoked by these insinuations he wrote to the Secretary of War, General Dearborn: "I feel it a duty to myself, my family and my profession to request of you a testimonial which may shut the mouth of calumny and strike dumb the voice of slander." He got the testimonial, a cool, carefully worded letter, in which high compliment was qualified by the remark that two exploring expeditions which he had performed "were not previously ordered by the President of the United States." The acknowledgment that they were known to the President and to the War Department was put in such a form as to leave it in doubt whether they had been approved in the first place or not. He was assured now, however, of the esteem of both President Jefferson and Secretary Dearborn. He was made to feel keenly the difference between explorers sent out by the President and explorers who had not awaited his approval, by seeing Lewis and Clark gratified with an appropriation while he waited and urged his request in vain

But he was not a man who could be utterly neglected. His rise in the Army was rapid. At the outbreak of the War of 1812 he was colonel of the 15th United States Infantry, and in the only battle which he ever fought he was a brigadier-general waiting for his promotion to be confirmed. The eccentricity of which he was capable showed itself in his famous plan of arming the rear rank of his regiment with shortened muskets and long pikes. People who never heard of the Mississippi and Arkansas expeditions are doubtless familiar with "Pike's regiment of pikes." The men honored Pike alive or dead, but he had no sooner fallen than they armed themselves with captured British muskets. Pike's career ended as suddenly and brilliantly as that of the man whom as a soldier he envied most. His battle of York within the limits of the modern Toronto, was more stubbornly fought than the battle of Quebec. He was fatally hurt by the explosion of a magazine. "Military history," adds Dr. Coues, "hardly furnishes a closer parallel than that between the death of Pike before York and of Wolfe before Quebec. Each led the assault; each conquered; each fell in the arms of victory; each is said to have pillowed his head on the stricken colors of the defenders." It is a task well done to restore the writings of such a man—writings which happen in Pike's case to be of special importance—to the general knowledge of his countrymen.

BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

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NEW-YORK SUPREME COURT.—Trial desired in Kings County. Catharine McCafferty, Bridget O'Connor, Maria Graff, Annie Kennedy, Martin Cassidy, plaintiffs, against Patrick Cassidy and —— Cassidy, his wife; Mary Cassidy, wife of Martin Cassidy; Michael Cassidy, Catharine Scallen, late widow of Thomas Cassidy, deceased; Maria Cassidy, Josephine Cassidy, Thomas Cassidy, John Cassidy, Frank Hunt, Martin Hunt and Bridget Hunt, his wife, defendants.

To the above-named defendants: You are hereby summoned to answer the complaint in this action, and to serve a copy of your answer on the Plaintiffs' Attorneys within twenty days after the service of this summons, exclusive of the day of service, and in case of your failure to appear or answer, judgment will be taken against you by default for the relief demanded in the complaint.

Dated May 13th, 1895.

MAPES & KELLY, Plaintiffs' Attorneys, Office and Post-office address, No. 200 Broadway, New-York, N. Y.

To the defendants, Mary Cassidy, wife of Martin Cassidy; Catharine Scallen, late widow of Thomas Cassidy, deceased; Maria Cassidy, Josephine Cassidy, Thomas Cassidy, John Cassidy, Frank Hunt, Martin Hunt and Bridget Hunt, his wife:

The foregoing summons is served upon you by publication, pursuant to an order of Hon. Willard Bartlett, a Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New-York, dated the 23d day of November, 1895, and filed with the complaint in the office of the Clerk of the County of Kings, in the County Court-House in the City of Brooklyn, in said State, on the 29th day of November, 1895.

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